

Devotional Studies No. 13

Triumphant Forgiveness Through Jesus

The phrase “forgiveness of sins” flashes like neon lights from the Cross of Jesus—“Father forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing” (**Luke 23:34**). The words of Isaiah (739 BC) ring loud and clear as he foretells the coming of the Messiah and His mission: “He was pierced for our transgressions, he was crushed for our iniquities” (**Isaiah 53:5**). Daniel (605 BC), too, addresses the forgiveness of sins through God’s Anointed One. He writes with pinpoint information: “Seventy ‘sevens’ are decreed for your people and your holy city to finish transgression, to put an end to sin, to atone for wickedness, to bring in everlasting righteousness, to seal up vision and prophecy and to anoint the most holy” (**Daniel 9:26**). Zechariah (520 BC), too, wrote about this same time period when he spoke of the coming “Branch” that would “remove the sin of this land in a single day” (**Zechariah 3:9**). The “Branch” is the one that Jacob speaks of when he announces to his sons about the scepter departing from Judah (**Genesis 49:10**). He informed his children that this event would not take place “until he comes to whom it belongs” (**49:10b**). Haggai (520 BC) also speaks of the shaking of the political powers (scepter departing) of Judah. It was during this shaking of the nations that the “desired of all nations” would come (**Haggai 2:7**).

With the coming of the “desired of all nations,” one hears the words of Jesus: “This is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins” (**Matthew 26:28**). Because of Jesus’ death upon the Cross, Paul writes to the believers in Colossae about forgiveness of sins through Christ. Prior to their conversion to Christ, they were dead in sins. In this short Epistle, Paul goes right to the heart of regeneration and its effects: “When you were dead in your sins and in the uncircumcision of your sinful nature, God made you alive with Christ. He forgave us all our sins” (**Colossians 2:13**). In dealing with forgiveness, Paul had to deal with the Law of God, which Law brings about condemnation. In order for God to extend forgiveness, He had to deal with His holy Law, which Law expresses disapproval of anyone who fails to adhere to perfection.

How did God forgive sins and not violate His Law? Paul explains: “having canceled the written code, with its regulations, that was against us and that stood opposed to us; he took it away, nailing it to the cross” (**2:14**). God took the I.O.U and nailed it to His Cross. He “canceled the written code,” and He nailed “it to the cross.” The KJV reads: “Blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us.” The “handwriting” is a list of charges against us. This “handwriting” represents a note signed by a debtor acknowledging his indebtedness. It is this note that God nailed to the Cross. God accomplished this feat through Christ. It is through Christ that one experiences this

new life. Prior to the new life, they were dead. In and through the work of Christ, God wipes away the sins of humanity. In this Epistle to the Colossians, Paul sets forth the amazing mercy of God. God's grace comes to humanity in and through Jesus. Even though believers are not under law, nevertheless, one must ask the question: how can anyone appropriate God's gift of redemption and, at the same time, live a life in defiance of God's grace? One must offer himself or herself to God. One's whole life is to be a life of service to God. In one's acceptance of God's grace, God sets one's feet in a new direction—a new path of life. In the new birth, one refashioned his or her heart so that one no longer points toward oneself but to God. Triumphant forgiveness through Christ demands a change from a self-seeking to a God-seeking life.

Those who accept Jesus as Lord in their lives experience justification by faith and justification from sin. In Jesus, one is set free from sin's guilt. When one accepts Jesus as God's Way of salvation, one passes from the reign of sin and enters the reign of righteousness. When one dies with Christ in baptism, one is set beyond the realm of God's Law; it can no longer condemn. In other words, the Law no longer rules—one now belongs to Jesus. When one participates in Christ's death through baptism, one is outside the pale of the Law's denunciation. Once one experiences God's grace of forgiveness, one must not live as if it never happened. When one is dead to sin, one lives for God. In the Ephesian Epistles, Paul calls attention to their condition prior to regeneration—"dead in your transgressions and sins" ([Ephesians 2:1](#)). Paul, in his Epistle to the Colossians writes: "For he has rescued us from the dominion of darkness and brought us into the kingdom of the Son he loves, in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins ([Colossians 1:13-14](#)). This forgiveness in and through Christ is the subject of heaven ([Revelation 5:9-14](#)). In God's grace, He comes to humanity and allows humanity to come to Him. God's forgiveness is seen in His wonderful providence in that He accommodated Himself to our capacity—God became flesh. This grace is triumphant forgiveness through Christ.